

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

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IN COOPERATION WITH the San Joaquin Local Health District and the Stockton Unified School District the State Department of Public Health has initiated a demonstration project to assist local physicians and schools by providing diagnostic and consultative services for children handicapped by learning disorders caused by "minimal cerebral dysfunction."

This term is now used to designate the conditions formerly referred to as "minimal brain damage," "neurologically handicapped," certain learning and perceptual disabilities and the "hyperkinetic behavior syndrome."

It is estimated there are 70 to 100 such neurologically impaired school children in the Stockton area who are in need of diagnosis and special management. Many more children who have mild to moderate degrees of this syndrome can be taught in regular classes, but would benefit from early and accurate identification of their individual learning disorders so that the most suitable educational techniques could be applied.

Project services provided include pediatric, neurological, electroencephalographic, social work and psychological evaluations. The pediatric evaluations are done by local specialists; the neurological consultations are provided by visiting neurologists from San Francisco. The psychological evaluations are provided by psychologists of the Stockton Unified School District.

The child's private physician participates in the case conference that is held after these evaluations and assists in formulating the diagnosis and recommendations for the child's medical, educational and social management. Reports and recommendations are made available to the child's physician for use in his supervision of the child's medical care and to the school's Admission Committee in its determination of a child's eligibility for the special classes, disabilities teachers, or home instruction.

Besides providing local physicians with a resource of outpatient diagnostic and consultative neurological services by a team of specialists, the project is exploring learning disabilities syndromes, the nature and extent of these problems among

children of school age, and investigating procedures for improving the screening, diagnosis and the medical and educational management of such handicapped children.

Funds to support this three-year project have been awarded to the Department's Bureau of Chronic Diseases by the Neurological and Sensory Disease Program of the U.S. Public Health Service.

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The need to have a patient with congestive heart failure adhere daily to his treatment program which he may have to continue for the duration of his life is one of the major areas of concern in providing total care.

As a way of assisting the patient, the department's Heart Disease Control program is developing a programed text, utilizing the programed instruction teaching method, to be used by the patient before his discharge from the hospital.

The text is to be ready for use by patients this October. Those responsible for the program are now considering hospital locations and welcome information regarding potential hospital sites for demonstration studies. If interested, please contact the department's Bureau of Chronic Diseases, 2000 Hearst Street, Berkeley.

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The department's Bureau of Occupational Health currently is conducting a comprehensive study of the effects of heat, noise and dust on the health of heavy construction equipment operators.

The study is the first of this type undertaken in the construction industry and is part of the department's continuing program aimed at the prevention of work-induced disease and disability in California's labor force.

Cooperating in this work are the U.S. Public Health Service, the Operating Engineers Union and a number of construction contractors.

The survey will include canal, freeway and other construction projects in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. The survey team, made up of physicians and engineers, will examine a total of 150 men and their jobs for 30 days.